



Education Act 1996

1996 CHAPTER 56

PART VI

SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, ATTENDANCE AND CHARGES

CHAPTER II

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

School attendance orders

- 438 Choice of school: child without [^{F1}EHC plan] [^{F2}or statement of special educational needs] [^{F2}, or an individual development plan which names a school].**
- (1) This section applies where a [^{F3}local authority] are required by virtue of section 437(3) to serve a school attendance order in respect of a child, other than a child for whom they maintain [^{F4}an EHC plan (in the case of a local authority in England) or] [^{F5}a statement under section 324] [^{F5}a child for whom an individual development plan is maintained in which a particular school is named] [^{F6}(in the case of a local authority in Wales)].
 - (2) Before serving the order, the authority shall serve on the parent a notice in writing—
 - (a) informing him of their intention to serve the order,
 - (b) specifying the school which the authority intend to name in the order and, if they think fit, one or more other schools which they regard as suitable alternatives, and
 - (c) stating the effect of subsections (3) to (6).
 - (3) If the notice specifies one or more alternative schools and the parent selects one of them within the period of 15 days beginning with the day on which the notice is served, the school selected by him shall be named in the order.
 - (4) If—

Changes to legislation: Education Act 1996, Section 438 is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 08 May 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) View outstanding changes

- [^{F7}(a) within the period mentioned in subsection (3) the parent applies for the child to be admitted to a school maintained by a [^{F3}local authority] and, where that authority are not the authority by whom the notice was served, notifies the latter authority of the application, and]
- (b) the child is offered a place at the school as a result of the application, that school shall be named in the order.

[^{F8}(5) If—

- (a) within the period mentioned in subsection (3), the parent applies to the [^{F3}local authority] by whom the notice was served for education to be provided at a school which is not a school maintained by a [^{F3}local authority], and
- (b) the child is offered a place at the school and the authority are required by virtue of regulations under section 18(3) to pay the fees payable in respect of the education provided for him at the school,
- that school shall be named in the order.]

(6) If, within the period mentioned in subsection (3)—

- (a) the parent—
- (i) applies for the child to be admitted to a school which is not maintained by a [^{F3}local authority]^{F9} . . . , and in respect of which no application is made under subsection (5), and
- (ii) notifies the [^{F3}local authority] by whom the notice was served of the application,
- (b) the child is offered a place at the school as a result of the application, and
- (c) the school is suitable to his age, ability and aptitude and [^{F10}to any special educational needs he may have]^{F10}—
- (i) (in the case of a local authority in England) any special educational needs the child may have, or
- (ii) (in the case of a local authority in Wales) any additional learning needs the child may have],

that school shall be named in the order.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 438 title inserted (1.9.2014) by [Children and Families Act 2014 \(c. 6\), s. 139\(6\), Sch. 3 para. 39\(3\)](#); S.I. 2014/889, art. 7(a) (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2014/2270 (as amended (1.4.2015) by S.I. 2015/505)
- F2** Words in s. 438 heading substituted (1.9.2021 for specified purposes, 1.1.2022 for specified purposes, 1.9.2022 for specified purposes) by [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018 \(anaw 2\), s. 100\(3\), Sch. 1 para. 4\(14\)\(c\)](#); S.I. 2021/373, arts. 3, 4, 6, 7 (as amended by S.I. 2021/938, art. 2); S.I. 2021/1243, art. 3 (with arts. 4-23) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, art. 2); S.I. 2021/1244, art. 3 (with arts. 4-21) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, art. 3); S.I. 2021/1245, arts. 3, 4 (with art. 1(4)); S.I. 2022/891, art. 3 (with arts. 4-25); S.I. 2022/892, arts. 2, 3 (with arts. 4-18); S.I. 2022/893, art. 4; S.I. 2022/894, art. 3; S.I. 2022/895, arts. 3, 4; S.I. 2022/896, art. 3 (with arts. 1(7), 4-22); S.I. 2022/897, art. 3 (with arts. 1(8), 4-21); S.I. 2022/898, arts. 2, 3
- F3** Words in Act substituted (5.5.2010) by [The Local Education Authorities and Children's Services Authorities \(Integration of Functions\) Order 2010 \(S.I. 2010/1158\), Sch. 2 para. 7\(2\)](#) (with Sch. 2 para. 7(4)(5))
- F4** Words in s. 438(1) inserted (1.9.2014) by [Children and Families Act 2014 \(c. 6\), s. 139\(6\), Sch. 3 para. 39\(2\)\(a\)](#); S.I. 2014/889, art. 7(a) (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2014/2270 (as amended (1.4.2015) by S.I. 2015/505)

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- F5** Words in s. 438(1) substituted (1.9.2021 for specified purposes, 1.1.2022 for specified purposes, 1.9.2022 for specified purposes) by Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (anaw 2), s. 100(3), **Sch. 1 para. 4(14)(a)**; S.I. 2021/373, arts. 3, 4, 6, 7 (as amended by S.I. 2021/938, **art. 2**); S.I. 2021/1243, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-23) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, **art. 2**); S.I. 2021/1244, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-21) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, **art. 3**); S.I. 2021/1245, arts. 3, 4 (with art. 1(4)); S.I. 2022/891, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-25); S.I. 2022/892, arts. 2, 3 (with arts. 4-18); S.I. 2022/893, **art. 4**; S.I. 2022/894, **art. 3**; S.I. 2022/895, arts. 3, 4; S.I. 2022/896, **art. 3** (with arts. 1(7), 4-22); S.I. 2022/897, **art. 3** (with arts. 1(8), 4-21); S.I. 2022/898, arts. 2, 3
- F6** Words in s. 438(1) inserted (1.9.2014) by Children and Families Act 2014 (c. 6), s. 139(6), **Sch. 3 para. 39(2)(b)**; S.I. 2014/889, art. 7(a) (with savings and transitional provisions in S.I. 2014/2270 (as amended (1.4.2015) by S.I. 2015/505)
- F7** S. 438(4)(a) substituted (1.9.1999) by 1998 c. 31, s. 140(1), **Sch. 30 para. 114(a)** (with ss. 138(9), 144(6)); S.I. 1999/2323, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**.
- F8** S. 438(5) substituted (1.9.1999 for certain purposes, otherwise prosp.) by 1998 c. 31, ss. 140(1), 145(3), **Sch. 30 para. 114(b)** (with ss. 138(9), 144(6)); S.I. 1999/2323, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**
- F9** Words in s. 438(6)(a)(i) repealed (1.9.1999) by 1998 c. 31, s. 140(1)(3), **Sch. 30 para. 114(c)**, **Sch.31** (with ss. 138(9), 144(6)); S.I. 1999/2323, art. 2(1), **Sch. 1**
- F10** S. 438(6)(c)(i)(ii) substituted for words (1.9.2021 for specified purposes, 1.1.2022 for specified purposes, 1.9.2022 for specified purposes) by Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (anaw 2), s. 100(3), **Sch. 1 para. 4(14)(b)**; S.I. 2021/373, arts. 3, 4, 6, 7 (as amended by S.I. 2021/938, **art. 2**); S.I. 2021/1243, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-23) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, **art. 2**); S.I. 2021/1244, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-21) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, **art. 3**); S.I. 2021/1245, arts. 3, 4 (with art. 1(4)); S.I. 2022/891, **art. 3** (with arts. 4-25); S.I. 2022/892, arts. 2, 3 (with arts. 4-18); S.I. 2022/893, **art. 4**; S.I. 2022/894, **art. 3**; S.I. 2022/895, arts. 3, 4; S.I. 2022/896, **art. 3** (with arts. 1(7), 4-22); S.I. 2022/897, **art. 3** (with arts. 1(8), 4-21); S.I. 2022/898, arts. 2, 3

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 13(2)(ba) substituted for s. 13(2)(aa)(b) by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(2\)](#)
- s. 15A(3A) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(3\)](#)
- s. 15B(3)(c) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(4\)](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/1012 art. 12\(1\)Sch. 2 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/863 Sch. 2 para. 4](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/865 Sch. 2 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2016/653 Sch. 3 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A-17D inserted by [2009 c. 22 s. 45](#)
- s. 17B-17D applied by [2009 c. 22 s. 86\(8\)](#)
- s. 457(4)(i)-(iia) repealed by [2012 c. 5 Sch. 14 Pt. 1](#)
- s. 457(4)(iii) words repealed by [2012 c. 5 Sch. 14 Pt. 1](#)
- s. 508(4) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(7\)](#)
- s. 537AA inserted by [2008 c. 25 Sch. 1 para. 8](#)
- s. 548(7A)(7B) inserted by [2008 c. 25 Sch. 1 para. 9\(5\)](#)
- s. 578(1) words repealed by [2005 c. 18 Sch. 19 Pt. 1](#)